



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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DEC 29 2005

Jeff Ottesen, Director
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Division of Program Development
3132 Channel Drive, Room 200, Mail Stop 2500
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Mr. Ottesen:

This letter is in reference to the DRAFT 2006-2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, Alaska Highway Alaska Public Lands Information Centers (APLIC) and Rest Area.

The Bureau of Land Management is one of the partner agencies involved in the cooperative APLIC. We are looking forward to the successful completion of the Alaska Highway Alaska Public Lands Information Center project. The construction is nearly ready to begin, but we have learned that construction funding needs to be identified in the 2006 STIP, to bring this very viable project to a successful completion.

Tok is the most strategic location on the Alaska roadnet to orient the motoring public to the public lands in Alaska. The *Alaska Highway APLIC and Rest Area* has been a cooperative planning effort among the state and federal agencies involved in the operation of four APLIC. The Tok Center has been faithfully serving visitors since the 1980s. The State of Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have worked collaboratively to plan and design an adequate new facility of high quality that will meet the needs of the travelers coming to Alaska and represent the borderlands region of Alaska well. With the planning done it would be terrific to be able to move forward with construction if this project is funded in the new STIP.

The existing Tok facility, operated by the Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development, is currently an important rest stop and trip planning facility for travelers along the Alaska Highway, but it is beyond capacity. The new facility needs to be funded, so the Tok staff can better meet the needs of the visitors, while at the same time helping "hold" people in Tok to its merchants' benefit. The planning for this project has revealed the rich potential of tourism in the borderlands region of the State.

Staff at the new facility will alert travelers to timely safety messages and road reports as well as promoting the recreational opportunities on both State and Federal lands in Alaska. This project has been supported in the community, and it has also been supported by cooperating land managing agencies.

Please reinstate the *Alaska Highway APLIC and Rest Area* funding in the 2006-2008 STIP. The Bureau of Land Management supports this project and sees this new facility as essential to the orientation of thousands of visitors traveling to our great State to enjoy her beauty and our public lands.

Thank you for your consideration and for reinstating this vital project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Julia Dougan".

Julia Dougan
Acting State Director